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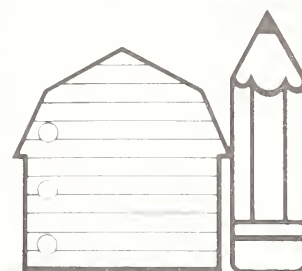
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Ag in the Classroom

Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



Jan./Feb. 1990

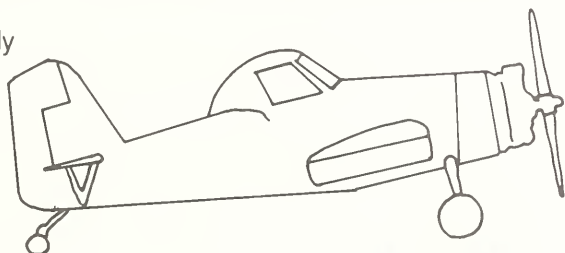
Vol. 5, No. 8

A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 317-A, Administration Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-2200. 202/447-5727

New Materials Take Students Up, Up and Away

"Kids are fascinated by airplanes," says Ruthanne Koch of the Women of the National Agricultural Aviation Association (WNAAA). "Introducing agriculture by talking about airplanes is a guaranteed way to arouse their interest."

With Cindy Schreiber-Beck, chair of the WNAAA Education

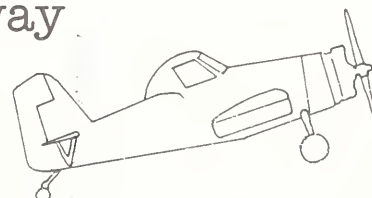


Committee, Koch has developed curriculum guides that use the subject of agricultural aviation as an introduction to the study of agriculture in the classroom. Koch serves as chair of the

WNAAA Public Relations Committee.

WNAAA offers two curriculum guides, one geared for elementary students and one including activities for junior/senior highs. The theme of

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A Front Door to Agricultural Science

A historic building on the grounds of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center today offers teachers and students a look at the research that is shaping the future. Opened in 1989, the ARS National Visitor Center provides a close-up look at the work of USDA research scientists.

The Visitor Center, housed in the Log Lodge, is a new educational experience on the international importance of food and agricultural sciences. The Log Lodge was originally built from blueprints of lodges for Yellowstone National Park by the depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps.

The outside of the building may be a reminder of the past, but inside the Log Lodge are displays featuring state-of-the-art research on the likely future of the food and fiber

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Historic Log Lodge now
houses the new ARS
National Visitor Center.



From the Director

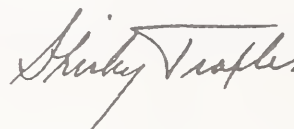
Dear Readers,

"Agricultural Literacy in a Changing World" is the theme of the 1990 National AG in the Classroom Conference, which will be on June 3, 4, and 5 at the Capitol Holiday Inn at 550 C Street SW in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Department of Agriculture invites all of you who are actively involved in your state's AITC program to attend. We want to learn more about your activities and give you the opportunity to hear all about the exciting developments occurring in AITC programs around the country. We also look forward to welcoming our colleagues from Canada and to finding out about AITC progress in each of the Provinces as well as nationally. This year's conference will feature a general

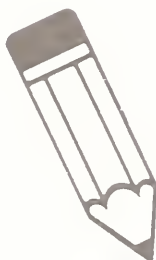
session on global agriculture and marketing and breakout sessions on food safety, the environment, and animal care. We look forward to seeing you in June.

Please complete and return the National AITC Conference registration form below before April 15. For additional information, contact the AITC office, 317-A, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone (202) 447-5727.

Yours truly,



Shirley Traxler



Register for the 1990 AITC National Conference

If you plan to attend the 1990 Ag in the Classroom National Conference on June 3, 4, and 5, at the Capitol Holiday Inn in Washington, D.C., please complete this form and return it to:

Heritage Travel Conference Service

985 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20024
Attention: Beatina Coe

The room rate is \$85.00 for single and \$105.00 for double occupancy + 11% tax. I will be sharing a room with _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone () _____

All room reservations must be accompanied by a one-night deposit in the form of a check or the following credit card information:

Credit card name _____

Number _____

Expiration date _____

Your signature _____

Please enclose with this form your payment of \$65 to cover conference registration which includes lunch on June 4 and 5 and breakfast on June 5.

Make check or money order payable to Heritage Travel Conference Service.

Important note: Registration fee after April 15 will be \$75.

Reservations should be made by April 15, 1990. If you need assistance with travel arrangements call Heritage Travel, toll free at: 1-800-626-5200.

Spotlight

Rhode Island Teacher Chooses the Best

Fourth grade students at Narragansett Elementary School in Narragansett, Rhode Island, are learning more than just literature and social studies. Thanks to teacher Elaine Stedman and materials developed by Rhode Island AITC, Narragansett students are learning about agriculture — and having fun while they do.

Stedman's involvement with teaching agriculture in the classroom began two years ago. She read about a poster contest to design a logo for Rhode Island AITC. Her student Greg Marchetti was one of two students from the state whose design was chosen. He, his parents, and Stedman were all invited to the state capitol to meet with the Lieutenant Governor and members of the legislature. After that experience, Stedman began to look for ways to teach more about agriculture.

Stedman believes that integrating agriculture into her regular lesson plans helps her enrich her students' experiences. She uses the Rhode Island Resource Activity Guide regularly. In fact, she says, "I even chose to use a lesson from the activity guide on the day I was evaluated!"

To help her students understand what life was like for the early settlers, Stedman had her students grind their own corn and bake corn bread. She duplicated activity

sheets from the guide that showed how early colonists used water mills or wind-mills to grind the corn. To give her students some "hands-on" experience, she even brought in stones they could use to

grind their own corn. "Of course," she says, "when you're being evaluated, you're always nervous about what *e/se* the kids might decide to do with the stones." But she says they were so engrossed in what they were learning that everything went well.

Stedman also includes information on agriculture in her Rhode Island history unit. Few of her students have any personal experience with farms. "By studying agriculture, they learn that the food they eat doesn't just start out on a grocery store shelf."

The most valuable thing about using the Rhode Island AITC materials, Stedman believes, is the flexibility they offer a teacher. "I love developing activities," she says, "but it's great to draw on the experience of other teachers, too. When I plan my unit, I can pick and choose activities from several teachers, so I can offer my students the best."

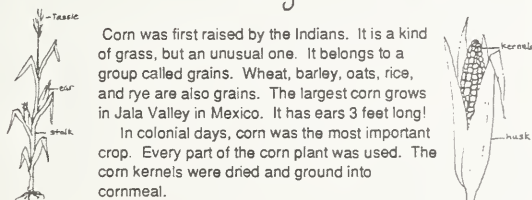


Elaine Stedman

Agriculture in the Classroom

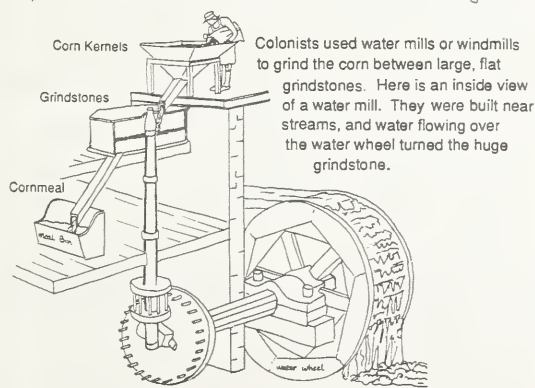


The Story of Corn



Corn was first raised by the Indians. It is a kind of grass, but an unusual one. It belongs to a group called grains. Wheat, barley, oats, rice, and rye are also grains. The largest corn grows in Jala Valley in Mexico. It has ears 3 feet long!

In colonial days, corn was the most important crop. Every part of the corn plant was used. The corn kernels were dried and ground into cornmeal.



Colonists used water mills or windmills to grind the corn between large, flat grindstones. Here is an inside view of a water mill. They were built near streams, and water flowing over the water wheel turned the huge grindstone.

The cornmeal was boiled to make a "mush" or corn pudding. Sometimes corn batter was roasted on a plank or fried on a griddle in little cakes. In Rhode Island these were called johnnycakes, and many people still love to eat them today. They are eaten with butter, molasses or maple syrup.

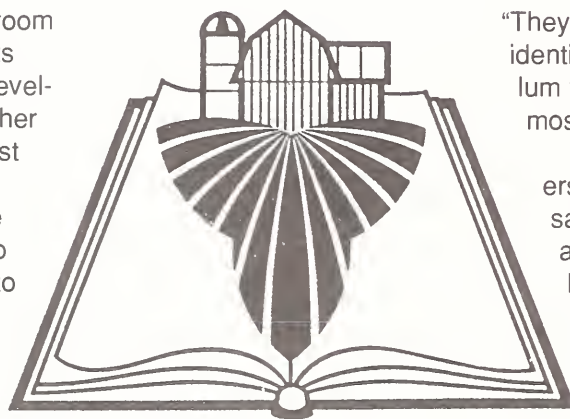
Chopped corn stalks were fed to cows in winter. Corn husks were used to stuff mattresses and corn cobs were burned to smoke meat.

The activity sheet is taken from the Rhode Island AITC Resource Activity Guide

Ontario's Ag in the Classroom program focused its efforts during the past year on developing resources and teacher materials. One of the most significant efforts of the program was to hire three educational consultants to work on a regional basis to develop AITC programs. The consultants have three major responsibilities:

- to examine curriculum to determine areas where agricultural activities could be integrated;
- to make contacts with county boards of education and to conduct professional inservice training for teachers;
- to coordinate the work of volunteer groups.

"Our consultants often work with agribusinesses that are interested in developing materials for school distribution," says Lorraine Holding, Manager, Special Programs, Rural Organizations and Services Branch, for Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture and Food.



"They help these businesses by identifying gaps in the curriculum where their efforts will be most helpful to teachers."

Because they are teachers themselves, Holding says, the consultants have also been instrumental in building relationships with teachers throughout the province. Articles in education association publications have introduced the consultants to teachers, and have given the program a

"tremendous boost," she says.

During 1990, Ontario AITC hopes to become an independent program. A steering committee and an implementation committee, representing both the public and private sectors, are hard at work developing specific strategies for creating an autonomous organization. During the next year, the program will also focus on pre-service education by developing workshops for teacher training institutions throughout Ontario.

Video Highlights

"New-Old" Method of Pest Control

Biological control is an old method for controlling agricultural pests that is generating new interest and excitement. A 30-minute, USDA-produced video, "Biological Control—A Natural Alternative," provides a greater understanding and appreciation of this environmentally safe way to eradicate or control agricultural pests.

More than 20,000 pest species cause losses of up to \$12 billion each year in the United States alone. Pest species include insects, weeds, nematodes, bacteria, fungi, and viruses. The sheer magnitude of the problem has forced growers to seek new ways to control pests. Biological control is one promising method now being adopted across the country.

The video includes both an overview of biocontrol and key examples of projects in which beneficial insects and other organisms are used to control pestiferous insects and

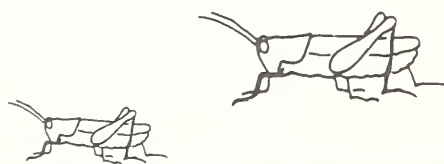
weeds. It can be shown freely via local television outlets without fear of copyright infringement.

The video is available in either Beta or VHS 1/2" format for \$50.

Contact:
Customer Service
National Audiovisual Center
8700 Edgeworth Drive
Capitol Heights, MD 20745
(301) 763-1896

A companion brochure, "Biological Control—Spreading the Benefits," is also available free of charge in limited quantities.

Contact:
Printing and Distribution Management
USDA
APHIS
M&B
G-110 Federal Building
Hyattsville, MD 20782
(301) 436-8413.



Rhode Island is the smallest U.S. state, but the Rhode Island AITC program is having a big impact on schools throughout the state.

Just off the press is the AITC Resource Activity Guide, which contains a wealth of information on integrating agriculture into a variety of subjects for grades 4-6. Al Bettencourt, Secretary of the Rhode Island AITC Committee, is now distributing the Guide at a series of training workshops that show teachers how to use the activities in their classrooms.

The introduction to the Guide notes, "Teachers today are overburdened with tasks. We dump all of the nation's ills on the doorstep of our educational institutions. We expect teachers to teach about drugs, sex, and morality in addition to math, science, reading, and writing. . . Now we are asking teachers to teach about agriculture."

The Guide is designed to make the job of teaching about agriculture easier for teachers. "We don't want to give teachers something *else* to teach," said Carol Stamp, state contact for AITC in Rhode Island. "We want them to incorporate activities from the Guide into their existing curriculum."

For that reason, the Language Arts section of the Guide includes a number of activities teachers can use with *Charlotte's Web* and *Little House on the Prairie*, both books that are often taught in Rhode Island schools. The Social Studies section includes activities that teach and reinforce map and chart reading, objectives that teachers are required to teach.

In addition to the Resource Guide, Rhode Island AITC is also distributing a box of resource materials on Rhode Island agriculture that teachers can use to further expand their students' knowledge of agriculture. It includes a number of USDA publications, 4-H activities, and Rhode Island Division of Agriculture materials. It also includes the software for Rhode Island's own version of the computer program, "Farm and Food Bytes."

The box also includes a videotape, "Dairy Farming in Rhode Island." The video, which shows a day in the life of a typical Rhode Island dairy farmer, is the first in what Bettencourt hopes will become a series of videos available to schools. "In some cases, we may duplicate and distribute existing videos," he says. "In other cases, we may produce our own."

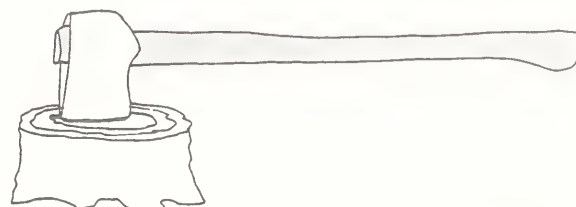
Bettencourt sees the need for AITC programs increasing. "Today, fewer and fewer kids grow up with any direct contact with the

farm," Bettencourt concludes. "Ag in the Classroom makes it possible for them to understand the importance of agriculture in their lives".



Name that President

Here's a quiz to test students' knowledge of our Presidents.



Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1802, in a log cabin in Kentucky. When he was seven, the family moved to Indiana where Abe spent his boyhood helping his father on their frontier farm. Lincoln grew to be a tall, strong youth capable of plowing a field and pitching hay. He was particularly skillful with an ax. He was excellent at splitting rails (small logs) for frontier fences.

Name 5 Presidents who did farmwork some time in their lives.

1st (1789-1797)

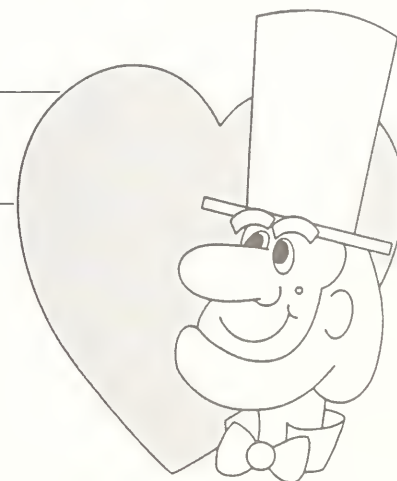
3rd (1801-1809)

7th (1767-1845)

16th (1861-1865)

39th (1977-1981)

(from the new Rhode Island AITC Resource Activity Guide)



Honest Abe

National Ag Day Scheduled for March 20

National Agriculture Day is a salute to the people, businesses, and organizations responsible for providing America with the highest quality of food and fiber. The celebration of Ag Day increases the awareness of agriculture's accomplishments and the challenges it faces in continuing to meet the world's food and fiber needs. This year, National Agriculture Day is scheduled for March 20; National Agriculture Week is March 18-24.

Last year, AITC programs planned a number of activities to coincide with National Agriculture Day. Special activities included:

- In Wil-
liston, Ohio,
third graders
examined soil
samples and
planted soy-
beans in cups
to observe
the growing
process.

- In Cler-
mont County,
Ohio, ele-
mentary
students

colored hundreds of paper bags with Ag Day designs. The bags were then given out to shoppers at two grocery store chains.

- In Pierre, South Dakota, the Chamber of Commerce adopted a fourth grade class. The students visited ag equipment dealers, grain elevators, and a ranch where they had a South Dakota brown bag lunch.

- In Dane County, Wisconsin, senior citizens served as judges of an essay contest for students in grades 3-8.

This year, the Agriculture Council of America is making a variety of materials available for use by AITC programs. "Tradition and Change" is the title of the poster reproducing a Bart Forbes painting. It measures 24" x 31" and is available at a special rate of \$1.00 each.

A wallet-size card filled with agricultural facts is available in packages of 100 for \$10.00. Agriculture Education Kits include a variety of resources that can both educate and entertain. The kits, available at a cost of \$2.00 each, include the following components: the Constitution Story (with an agricultural slant), five brief biographical profiles of famous people in agriculture, a two-page spread of fun facts about agriculture with humor-

N A T I O N A L AGRICULTURE DAY

Honoring America's Providers



"Tradition and Change" is the title of a poster by Bart Forbes celebrating National Agriculture Day.

ous illustrations, a large agricultural crossword puzzle and two fact cards with the most requested agricultural statistics from across the nation.

To order these materials, or to receive further information about National Agriculture Day, contact Paul Wagner at (202) 682-9200 or write to the Agriculture Council of America, 1250 I Street, N.W., Suite 601, Washington, DC 20005.

Agricultural Science

Continued from page 1

industries. Visitors to the center learn about plant breeding and biotechnology, animal nutrition and disease prevention, soil conservation, irrigation technology, biological control of pests, and human nutrition studies. Other exhibits tell of careers in agricultural science and engineering, the products and inventions of such research, ARS interaction with regulatory agencies, and the ARS Science Hall of Fame.

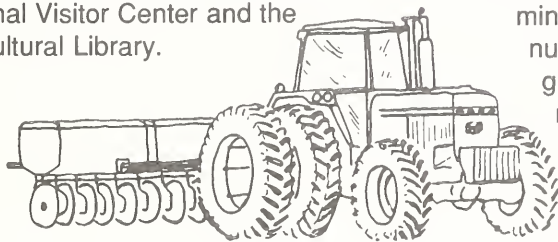
During 1989, more than 25,000 people toured the Visitor Center. Steve Berberich, Director of the Center, says visitors include scientists, business people, foreign travelers, and members of the general public. But the most frequent visitors by far are teachers and students.

"We want teachers to view tours of the Visitor Center as a regular part of their curriculum," Berberich notes. When teachers call to arrange a tour, staff members will help tailor a visit that will meet the teacher's specific needs. They also send out materials teachers can use before and after the tour.

The Beltsville Center is the site for scientific research in a number of key areas. Scientists who are studying nutrition, medicine, hydrology, and the greenhouse effect are all close at hand.

"Teachers are always surprised by the breadth and scope of agricultural research they see here," Berberich reports. "In fact," he adds, "'amazed' is the word we keep hearing."

Those who attend the national AITC conference will have the pleasure of touring both the National Visitor Center and the National Agricultural Library.



Up, Up and Away

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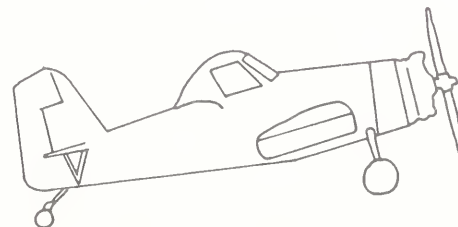
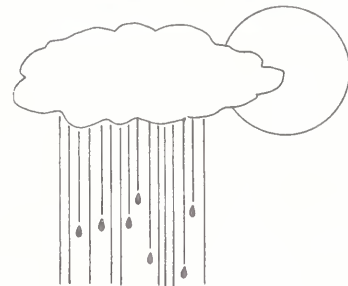
both guides is "Agricultural Aviation: Critical Assist for the World's Food Supply."

Both guides offer students a brief look at the history of agricultural aviation. Specialized activities allow teachers to integrate the subject of agricultural aviation in subjects ranging from language arts to physics and from social studies to earth science.

Both guides include a number of reproducible activity sheets, as well as a suggested list of additional activities that teachers can use. Guides were reviewed by educators and by agricultural aviators before publication to make sure materials were both accurate and appropriate for classroom use.

The guides are also designed to help develop a positive image of the agricultural aviation industry. "We reviewed textbooks before we began writing the materials," Koch notes. "In most textbooks, there is no mention made of agricultural aviation. But when it is mentioned, it is usually in a negative context."

Activities also respond to another real concern. "Teachers know that the biggest complaint they hear from students is, 'When will I ever need to know this?'" says Koch. The WNAAA materials help teachers respond to that question. All situations presented in the curriculum guides reflect a pilot's "real-life" experiences, Koch notes. "Whether it's determining the cost of fuel or planning the number of acres that can be sprayed in a given amount of time, we've tried to make our materials reflect the problems we face every day."



Mississippi: New Farm and Food Bytes

Working with the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service, the Mississippi AITC program has developed a Mississippi section of the Farm and Food Bytes computer program. The program, says Mississippi state contact Helen Jenkins, "has proved to be an exciting way to learn about agriculture with emphasis on our own state."

Through the cooperation of Farm Bureau Insurance Companies, each county Farm Bureau in the state has received a copy of the computer program. At the state's leadership

conference last spring, computers were set up in the meeting areas and leaders had a chance to get some real "hands-on" experience working with the program.

One copy of the program was distributed to a school in each of the state's 100 counties. Counties and school districts are placing orders for additional programs. The Cooperative Extension Service, for example, has ordered several copies of the program for use by 4-H Clubs.

Ag in the Classroom — State Contacts

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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Montgomery, Alabama 36193
(205) 261-5872
(Home: (205) 272-2611)

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Windham County Conservation
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Camp Hill, Pennsylvania 17011
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Huron, South Dakota 57350
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(615) 388-7872

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Salt Lake City, Utah 84116
(801) 533-4104

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